

Skin Tags (Acrochordons)

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Skin tags are **small, soft, harmless growths** that often look like a tiny bump or a “hanging” piece of skin on a thin stalk. They’re **very common** and **not skin cancer**.

They usually show up where skin **rubs or folds**, such as:

- Neck
- Armpits
- Groin/inner thighs
- Under the breasts
- Eyelids



Why do skin tags happen?

No single cause, but they’re commonly linked to:

- **Friction/rubbing** (skin folds, jewelry, clothing)
- **Age**
- **Weight gain/obesity**
- **Metabolic factors** (insulin resistance/metabolic syndrome)
- **Pregnancy/hormonal shifts**

When should you get one checked?

Make an appointment if a “tag”:

- Is **painful, rapidly growing, bleeding repeatedly, or changing color**
- Looks very different from your other spots

- Is on a sensitive area (like the eyelid or genitals)
 - You're not sure it's truly a skin tag (some growths can mimic them)
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Treatment options (in-office)

Skin tags don't *need* treatment unless they bother you (snagging, irritation, cosmetics). Dermatologists can usually remove them quickly, often in one visit.

Common methods include:

- **Snip removal** (sterile scissors/blade; sometimes local numbing)
- **Cryotherapy** (freezing)
- **Cautery** (gentle electrical "heat" to remove and control bleeding)

Avoid DIY cutting or harsh home remedies—they can cause bleeding, irritation, or infection, and you might be treating the wrong thing.

Pre-Procedure Instructions (Pre-Op)

1–3 days before

- Avoid tanning/sunburn on the area.
- Tell us if you have: a bleeding disorder, pacemaker (if using cautery), diabetes, or you take blood thinners (aspirin, warfarin, Eliquis/Xarelto, etc.). Do **not** stop any medication unless your prescribing clinician says to.
- If you're prone to keloids or dark marks after healing, mention it (we may adjust technique/counseling).

Day of treatment

- Shower and arrive with **clean skin** (no lotion, oils, makeup on the area).
 - Wear comfortable clothing that won't rub the spot afterward (especially neck/underarm/groin).
 - Plan to remove necklaces or tight collars if treating the neck.
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Aftercare Instructions (Post-Op)

Most sites heal like a small superficial scrape.

For the first 24 hours

- Keep the area **clean and dry**.

- If bandaged, leave it in place as instructed.

Starting the next day

- Gently wash with mild soap and water; pat dry.
- Apply a thin layer of **petrolatum (Vaseline/Aquaphor)** and cover with a small bandage if the area rubs.
- Avoid picking/scabbing.

What's normal

- Mild tenderness, slight redness, or a small scab.
- A tiny amount of spotting the first day.

Activity

- Normal daily activity is fine; avoid friction (tight clothing, shaving over the area) until healed.

Call the office urgently if

- Bleeding won't stop after 10–15 minutes of firm pressure
- Increasing pain, warmth, swelling, spreading redness, pus/drainage, red streaks, or fever

If a growth is **new, changing, bleeding, painful, or you're unsure what it is**, schedule a skin check. We'll confirm the diagnosis and discuss the safest removal option.

FAQ

Are skin tags contagious?

No. They're not considered contagious.

Do skin tags mean I have cancer?

Skin tags are **benign (noncancerous)**. If a spot looks unusual, we evaluate it to confirm what it is.

Why do mine keep coming back?

Removing a specific tag removes that tag, but **new ones can form** over time—especially in friction areas.

Does removal hurt?

Most patients feel minimal discomfort. Small tags may be removed quickly; larger ones may need **local numbing** first.

Will I have a scar?

Most heal with little to no mark. Some people can develop a small light/dark spot or a tiny scar, especially if they pick at it or if the area is prone to friction.

Can I remove a skin tag at home?

Not recommended. DIY removal can lead to **bleeding, irritation, ulcers, or infection**, and you might misidentify the growth.

Is skin tag removal covered by insurance?

Often it's considered **cosmetic**, but coverage varies. If the tag is repeatedly bleeding, painful, or irritated, sometimes documentation helps—ask your insurer/our office.
